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State Overview

IDAHO'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASED TO 4.6 PERCENT

Labor force details for the state, labor market areas, counties, and cities can be found in State Table 1 on page 3.

Idaho's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March increased one-tenth of a percentage point to 4.6 percent. The comparable national unemployment rate was 4.3 percent, the highest rate since July 1999, an increase of one-tenth of a percentage point from February. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Idaho in March 2000 was 4.8 percent, two-tenths of a percentage point higher than the current rate.

Idaho's labor force components changed slightly over the month. The *Civilian Labor Force*, at 673,300 persons in March, increased 0.8 percent. The number of persons unemployed, 30,900, increased by 500. The number of persons employed, 642,400, increased by 4,600.

The changes from March 2000 were more dramatic. From one year ago, the number of persons unemployed decreased 200, and the number of persons employed increased 22,400. Overall, the *Civilian Labor Force*, increased 3.4 percent, or 22,200 persons since March 2000. Job growth over the year indicates that even with announced layoffs and a dismal outlook for Idaho's natural resource industries, the economy is still growing, but at a slower pace.

AREA LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

Unemployment rates are calculated each month for eight Labor Market Areas (LMAs) in Idaho—Boise City MSA, Pocatello City MSA, Bonneville LMA, Cassia-Minidoka LMA, Idaho-Lewis LMA, Magic Valley LMA, Panhandle LMA, and Seaport LMA. State Table 1 lists the counties included in each Labor Market Area.

The Idaho-Lewis LMA reported the highest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March at 9.1 percent, up from 8.8 percent in February. The Panhandle LMA followed with an unemployment rate of 8.6 percent, up from 7.8 percent in February. This was the largest percentage point increase experienced by any LMA. The Idaho-Lewis LMA has had the highest unemployment rate for a labor market area since May 1994 with two exceptions – June 1998 the Cassia-Minidoka LMA's rate was 9.4 percent and the Idaho-Lewis LMA's rate was 9.3 percent and May 1999 when both the Idaho-Lewis LMA and Panhandle LMA had an unemployment rate of 9.4 percent. Idaho-Lewis is the smallest of Idaho's labor market areas and is very dependent on natural resource industries, especially lumber and forestry.

The Boise Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) reported the lowest unemployment rate at 3.1 percent, down one-tenth of a percentage point from February. The largest of the state's labor market areas encompasses Ada and Canyon counties. It also comprises 36 percent of the state's labor force. Because of its size, the Boise MSA has a direct influence on the state's unemployment rate. The *Service-Producing Industries*, which tend to be more stable, accounted for 77 percent of the

Boise MSA's nonfarm employment. The *Services* sector lead the way with 34 percent of the jobs in *Service-Producing Industries* followed by *Retail Trade* and *Government* with 25 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

COUNTY LABOR FORCE

Of the 44 counties in the state, four experienced double-digit seasonally adjusted unemployment rates in March.

- » Clearwater County at 13.9 percent, down from 16.9 percent in February.
- » Adams County at 13.0 percent, down from 14.8 percent in February.
- » Shoshone County at 12.7 percent, up from 10.9 percent in February.
- » Benewah County at 11.6 percent, up from 8.6 percent in February.

These four counties rely heavily on natural resource-based industries, mainly timber harvesting. Shoshone County's major industry is metal mining. These counties also had the largest percentage point increase and decrease between February and March of all the counties. Clearwater County's unemployment rate was the largest decrease, 3.0 percentage points, while Benewah County had the largest increase, 3.0 percentage points.

Four counties reported an unemployment rate below 3.0 percent in February.

- » Teton County at 2.2 percent, down from 2.6 percent.
- » Madison County at 2.3 percent, up from 2.2 percent.
- » Blaine County at 2.6 percent, down from 2.8 percent.
- » Ada County at 2.6 percent, up from 2.4 percent.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs continued to grow in March as the total number of jobs reached a record level, 556,400. The number of jobs in March was 4,600 more than February and 12,700 more than March 2000. *Service-Producing Industries* gained 3,700 jobs whereas the *Goods-Producing Industries* gained only 900 jobs. (For more information, see State Table 2 on page 5.)

Mining

Mining employment experienced a loss of 100 jobs from February 2001 to March 2001. During March, the 140 jobs lost in *Metal Mining* were slightly offset by a gain of 60 jobs in the *Nonmetal Mining* sector. The loss of jobs in *Metal Mining* was a direct result of the closure of the nation's largest silver mine, Sunshine Mine in Kellogg. On February 16, 130 miners were laid off. The Sunshine Mine began on a hillside east of Kellogg in 1884 by brothers True and Dennis Blake and became one of the nation's largest and most productive underground silver mines. In its heyday, it employed nearly 600 workers. By its 100th anniversary, it had yielded more than 300 million ounces of silver. In recent years, the mine's owners have fallen on hard times, going through two bankruptcies in the last decade. A major blow came in mid-February as Asarco's smelter at East Helena, Montana, informed Sunshine's management that the silver concentrate trucked from Kellogg to smelter would no longer be accepted. Asarco announced plans to close the smelter indefinitely. Thus a chapter in Idaho's mining history came to an end.

Employment growth in *Nonmetal Mining* was the result of increased activity in the phosphate mines in eastern Idaho as the weather im-

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proved. When the data was rounded, the changes were too small to affect the published employment levels.

Construction

Construction reported the largest and only gain of jobs in the *Goods-Producing Industries* during March. Employment, at 32,100, was up 1,100 from February, and unchanged from March 2000. The monthly increase of jobs was split between *Heavy Construction* and *Special Trade Contractors* with 460 and 660 new jobs, respectively. The year-to-date loss of 310 jobs in *Building Construction* offset the 150 new jobs in *Heavy Construction* and 160 new jobs in *Special Trade Contractors*.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing, the largest *Goods-Producing Industry* sector, experienced a job loss of 100 between February and March to 75,100. However, the year-to-date job loss of 600 is much more significant.

A loss of 100 jobs each occurred in the following industries between February and March: *Logging; Fabricated Metal Products, excluding Machinery & Transportation Equipment; Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment; Food Processing, Paper Products; and Other Durable Goods*. The total loss of 600 jobs could not be offset by the increased activity in *Stone, Clay, Glass, & Concrete Products* (100 jobs); *Electronic & Other Electrical Equipment & Components, except Computers* (200 jobs); *Transportation Equipment* (100 jobs); *Canned, Frozen, & Preserved Fruits, Vegetables & Specialty Products* (100 jobs); and *Other Durable Goods* (100 jobs). Many of these new jobs are seasonal. During March, it was announced that several hundred workers would be laid off in the "high tech" industry. The job losses will not be reflected in the nonfarm data until April because they occurred mid to late March. Also, while some "high tech" firms were laying off, there was hiring in other firms. It will be several months before the full impact of the layoffs is known.

The loss of jobs between March 2000 and March 2001 primarily occurred in *Lumber & Wood Products*. The number of jobs in March 2001 was 10,700 down from 12,300 in March 2000. The only sector that did not experience a loss of jobs was *Logging*, which remained unchanged. The closure of the Jaypee sawmill, a temporary layoff at Potlatch, and small reductions at many sawmills have had a negative impact on the number of jobs in the lumber industry. The number of jobs in logging is generally at their lowest level in March because of "spring break-up" and adequate stockpiles to meet market demand. The decreased demand for modular homes has also had a negative impact. The outlook does not look good, as 375 jobs will be lost when Boise Cascade closes their sawmills in Emmett and Cascade in June.

Transportation, Communications, & Utilities

The addition of 400 new jobs from March 2000 is the most noteworthy event in *Transportation, Communica-*

State Table 1: March 2001 Labor Force (preliminary)

Seasonally Adjusted	Labor Force	Unemp.	% Unemp.	Total Emp.
Seaport LMA	33,780	1,480	4.4	32,300
Nez Perce County	22,220	930	4.2	21,290
Asotin County, WA	11,570	550	4.8	11,020
Boise City MSA	243,280	7,560	3.1	235,720
Ada County	175,900	4,590	2.6	171,310
Canyon County	67,380	2,970	4.4	64,410
Pocatello City MSA*	40,570	1,660	4.1	38,910
Bonneville LMA	82,520	2,980	3.6	79,540
Bingham County	22,500	980	4.4	21,520
Bonneville County	47,810	1,550	3.2	46,260
Butte County	1,640	60	3.8	1,580
Jefferson County	10,550	380	3.6	10,170
Cassia-Minidoka LMA	19,680	1,250	6.4	18,430
Cassia County	9,780	610	6.3	9,170
Minidoka County	9,900	640	6.5	9,260
Idaho-Lewis LMA	7,740	710	9.1	7,030
Idaho County	6,190	590	9.5	5,600
Lewis County	1,550	120	7.7	1,430
Panhandle LMA	90,190	7,800	8.6	82,390
Benewah County	4,480	520	11.6	3,960
Bonner County	17,580	1,510	8.6	16,070
Boundary County	4,550	400	8.8	4,150
Kootenai County	56,770	4,500	7.9	52,270
Shoshone County	6,810	870	12.7	5,940
Magic Valley LMA	49,090	1,830	3.7	47,260
Gooding County	6,850	250	3.6	6,600
Jerome County	9,210	350	3.8	8,860
Twin Falls County	33,030	1,230	3.7	31,800
Adams County	1,575	205	13.0	1,370
Bear Lake County	2,875	125	4.3	2,750
Blaine County	11,680	300	2.6	11,380
Boise County	2,340	110	4.8	2,230
Camas County	440	20	5.0	420
Caribou County	3,140	170	5.4	2,970
Clark County	660	30	4.5	630
Clearwater County	3,750	520	13.9	3,230
Custer County	2,160	210	9.6	1,950
Elmore County	9,470	560	5.9	8,910
Franklin County	4,940	180	3.6	4,760
Fremont County	4,870	310	6.3	4,560
Gem County	6,340	355	5.6	5,985
Latah County	14,180	450	3.2	13,730
Lemhi County	3,510	290	8.3	3,220
Lincoln County	1,935	65	3.4	1,870
Madison County	11,450	260	2.3	11,190
Oneida County	1,835	65	3.6	1,770
Owyhee County	4,020	160	4.0	3,860
Payette County	10,480	780	7.4	9,700
Power County	3,890	240	6.2	3,650
Teton County	3,550	80	2.2	3,470
Valley County	4,150	310	7.4	3,840
Washington County	4,750	385	8.1	4,365
State of Idaho	673,260	30,900	4.6	642,360
Idaho Cities				
Boise	111,310	2,910	2.6	108,400
Coeur d'Alene	20,030	1,240	6.2	18,790
Idaho Falls	29,520	1,010	3.4	28,510
Lewiston	19,300	700	3.6	18,600
Nampa	20,580	990	4.8	19,590
Pocatello	29,070	1,205	4.1	27,865
Twin Falls	17,310	720	4.1	16,590

* Bannock County

tions, & Utilities. Growth included 300 new jobs in *Communications*, primarily in call centers. Not all call centers are in the *Communication* industry as the majority of them are in the *Business Services* sector. However, the expansion of call centers for telephone companies and the opening of Alaska Airlines call center in Boise contributed to the increase in the number of jobs in *Communications*. The growth in *Communications* helped to offset job losses in *Trucking* and *Railroads*. With the increased in fuel costs, trucking companies are looking for ways to be more efficient.

Trade

Wholesale Trade employment increased in March, as the seed houses were busy providing seed for the 2001-growing season. Many farmers tried to get a jump on the potential water shortage by planting early. When farmers plant early, they run the risk of too much moisture from spring rains or a spring frost. Both of those activities occurred this year resulting in some fields being replanted, thus the need for more seed. Idaho is a major seed producer providing barley, grain, vegetable seed, potato seed, etc.

Retail Trade gained 600 jobs in March, bringing the number of jobs to 107,200. A loss of 250 jobs in *Miscellaneous Retail* resulted from a seasonal slowdown in gift stores, toy stores, catalog stores, floral shops, and other small retail outlets. The number of jobs increased by 350 in *Eating & Drinking Places*, 230 in *Building Materials, Hardware, Garden Supply & Manufactured Home Dealers*, and 150 in *General Merchandise Stores*, helping to offset the loss.

The number of jobs in *Retail Trade* increased 3,400 from one year ago. *General Merchandise Stores* experienced the largest year-to-date increase with 2,300 jobs. The significant growth was in the expansion of Wal-Mart, Fred Meyer, and other box stores across the state. Several major *Eating & Drinking Places* also expanded their services to Idaho during the past 12 months, having an influence on the 700 new jobs. Two other growth sectors are *Food Stores* (530) and *Apparel Stores* (340).

Services

Services, at 144,100 jobs, accounted for 26 percent of March's *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs*. During March, 1,700 jobs were added. The job gain showed some seasonal influences as *Hotel & Other Lodging Places*, *Amusement & Recreation Services*, and *Agriculture Services* added a total of 700 jobs. The big push to get the last few skiers on the slopes resulted in additional jobs in the tourist-related sectors. The lodging sector was gearing up for conventions, meetings, and other business activities as part of the spring and summer season. Field preparation resulted in more jobs in the agriculture sector. *Personnel Supply Services* was also a major contributor with an additional 300 new jobs in March.

Over the past 12 months, 6,100 new jobs have been added to *Services*. The growth has been across the majority of the sectors with *Personnel Supply Services*; *Miscellaneous Business Services*; *Health Services*; *Education Services*; *Social Services*; and *Engineering, Accounting, Research, Management, & Related Services* each adding over 600 new jobs.

Government

The increase in *Government* jobs was centered on activity in *State & Local Government*. The *Local Government Administration* sector added 300 new jobs as the summer grounds-keeping began. The 200 new jobs in *Federal Government* were also seasonal in nature as additional people were hired to help with taxes and outdoor activities. The *State & Local Government Administration* sector will experience job growth in April and May as cities and counties begin their summer maintenance and activity programs. The growth at both the state and local level will continue throughout the summer in contrast to the loss of jobs in *Education*.

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State Table 2: Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

BY PLACE OF WORK	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	556,400	551,800	543,700	0.8	2.3
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	109,400	108,500	110,100	0.8	-0.6
Mining	2,200	2,300	2,300	-4.3	-4.3
Metal Mining	1,000	1,100	1,300	-9.1	-23.1
Construction	32,100	31,000	32,100	3.5	0.0
Manufacturing	75,100	75,200	75,700	-0.1	-0.8
Durable Goods	46,500	46,500	46,900	0.0	-0.9
Lumber & Wood Products	10,700	10,800	12,300	-0.9	-13.0
Logging	1,700	1,800	1,700	-5.6	0.0
Sawmills & Planing Mills	4,200	4,200	4,800	0.0	-12.5
Wood Buildings & Mobile Homes	1,000	1,000	1,300	0.0	-23.1
Other Lumber & Wood Products	3,800	3,800	4,500	0.0	-15.6
Stone, Clay, Glass & Concrete Products	1,400	1,300	1,400	7.7	0.0
Fabricated Metal Products, exc. Machinery & Transportation Equip.	2,900	3,000	3,000	-3.3	-3.3
Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment	10,300	10,400	10,200	-1.0	1.0
Electronic & Other Electrical Equip. & Components, Exc., Computer	15,200	15,000	13,700	1.3	10.9
Transportation Equipment	2,300	2,200	2,500	4.5	-8.0
Other Durable Goods	3,700	3,800	3,800	-2.6	-2.6
Nondurable Goods	28,600	28,700	28,800	-0.3	-0.7
Food Processing	16,800	16,900	16,900	-0.6	-0.6
Canned, Frozen, & Preserved Fruits, Vegetables & Food Specialties	9,300	9,200	9,600	1.1	-3.1
Paper Products	2,100	2,200	2,200	-4.5	-4.5
Printing, Publishing & Allied Products	5,400	5,400	5,300	0.0	1.9
Chemicals & Allied Products	2,300	2,300	2,300	0.0	0.0
Other Nondurable Goods	2,000	1,900	2,100	5.3	-4.8
SERVICE-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	447,000	443,300	433,600	0.8	3.1
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	27,800	27,700	27,400	0.4	1.5
Transportation	17,000	17,100	16,800	-0.6	1.2
Railroad	1,400	1,400	1,500	0.0	-6.7
Motor Freight Transportation & Warehousing	9,700	9,800	9,900	-1.0	-2.0
Communications	7,000	6,800	6,700	2.9	4.5
Electric, Gas, & Sanitary Services	3,800	3,800	3,900	0.0	-2.6
Trade	140,800	139,800	136,200	0.7	3.4
Wholesale Trade	33,600	33,200	32,400	1.2	3.7
Durable Goods	15,700	15,700	15,100	0.0	4.0
Nondurable Goods	17,900	17,500	17,300	2.3	3.5
Retail Trade	107,200	106,600	103,800	0.6	3.3
Building Materials, Hardware, Garden Supply & Manuf. Home Dealers	6,200	6,000	6,400	3.3	-3.1
General Merchandise Stores	13,400	13,200	11,100	1.5	20.7
Food Stores	19,600	19,500	19,100	0.5	2.6
Automotive Dealers & Gasoline Service Stations	11,600	11,600	11,800	0.0	-1.7
Eating & Drinking Places	37,200	36,900	36,500	0.8	1.9
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	23,500	23,500	23,300	0.0	0.9
Banking	7,300	7,200	7,300	1.4	0.0
Services	144,100	142,400	138,000	1.2	4.4
Hotels & Other Lodging Places	7,700	7,600	7,900	1.3	-2.5
Personal Services	4,600	4,500	4,400	2.2	4.5
Business Services	28,400	27,900	26,700	1.8	6.4
Amusement and Recreation Services	6,700	6,600	6,500	1.5	3.1
Health Services	36,700	36,500	35,200	0.5	4.3
Hospitals	12,000	11,900	11,600	0.8	3.4
Engineering, Accounting, Research, Management, & Related Services	18,300	18,400	17,400	-0.5	5.2
Government	110,800	109,900	108,700	0.8	1.9
Federal Government	12,500	12,300	12,300	1.6	1.6
State & Local Government	98,300	97,600	96,400	0.7	2.0
State Government	29,300	28,900	28,800	1.4	1.7
Education	14,800	14,400	14,100	2.8	5.0
Administration	14,500	14,500	14,700	0.0	-1.4
Local Government	69,000	68,700	67,600	0.4	2.1
Education	39,900	39,900	38,700	0.0	3.1
Administration	29,100	28,800	28,900	1.0	0.7

*-Preliminary Estimate

2-Estimates include all full or part time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay in the following industry groups during the pay period ending nearest the 12th of the month.

DATA PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

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State Table 3: Economic Indicators

	March 2001	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
IDAHO LABOR FORCE ⁽¹⁾					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	673,300	668,200	651,100	0.8	3.4
Unemployment	30,900	30,400	31,100	1.6	-0.6
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	4.6	4.5	4.8		
Total Employment	642,400	637,800	620,000	0.7	3.6
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	666,300	659,200	644,200	1.1	3.4
Unemployment	37,400	39,000	37,500	-4.1	-0.3
Percent of Labor Force Unemployed	5.6	5.9	5.8		
Total Employment	628,900	620,200	606,700	1.4	3.7
U. S. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ⁽²⁾					
	4.3	4.2	4.0		
U.S. CONSUMER PRICE INDEX ⁽²⁾					
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W)	172.6	172.4	167.9	0.1	2.8
All Urban Consumer (CPI-U)	176.2	175.8	171.2	0.2	2.9
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture Employment	29,320	26,640	28,730	10.1	2.1
Operators	9,010	9,010	9,010	0.0	0.0
Unpaid Family	430	370	420	16.2	2.4
Hired Workers	19,880	17,260	19,300	15.2	3.0
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE					
Claims Activities					
Initial Claims ⁽³⁾	8,810	10,324	8,261	-14.7	6.6
Weeks Claimed ⁽⁴⁾	82,282	90,820	73,578	-9.4	11.8
Benefit Payment Activities ⁽⁵⁾					
Weeks Compensated	71,951	78,311	65,875	-8.1	9.2
Total Benefit \$ Paid	15,401,747	16,708,671	13,233,456	-7.8	16.4
Average Weekly Benefit Amount	\$214.06	\$213.36	\$200.89	0.3	6.6
Covered Employers	39,867	39,717	38,409	0.4	3.8
Total Benefit \$ Paid During Last 12 Months ⁽⁴⁾	\$113,639,944	\$111,471,653	\$105,039,586	1.9	8.2

(1) Preliminary Estimate

(2) Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

(3) Includes all entitlements/programs on Intrastate and Interstate Agent, New, and Additional Claims

(4) Includes all entitlements/programs, Intrastate and Interstate Agent

(5) Includes all entitlements/programs, Total Liable Activities

HOURS AND EARNINGS

	Average Weekly Earnings*			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	March 2001	Feb 2001	March 2000	March 2001	Feb 2001	March 2000	March 2001	Feb 2001	March 2000
Mining	\$582.40	\$617.65	\$591.07	36.4	38.7	40.1	\$16.00	\$15.96	\$14.74
Construction	\$590.87	\$555.98	\$544.68	36.7	35.1	35.3	\$16.10	\$15.84	\$15.43
Total Manufacturing	\$600.99	\$593.25	\$527.28	38.5	37.5	38.6	\$15.61	\$15.82	\$13.66
Lumber & Wood Products	\$458.66	\$488.21	\$477.12	34.0	34.6	36.9	\$13.49	\$14.11	\$12.93
Food & Kindred Products	\$464.44	\$436.36	\$448.08	39.9	37.2	39.9	\$11.64	\$11.73	\$11.23
Communications	\$745.12	\$750.75	\$679.46	42.7	42.9	40.3	\$17.45	\$17.50	\$16.86
Electric, Gas, & Sanitary Services	\$875.47	\$897.26	\$891.60	40.4	40.6	40.0	\$21.67	\$22.10	\$22.29
Trade	\$316.68	\$309.23	\$301.43	29.0	28.9	28.9	\$10.92	\$10.70	\$10.43
Wholesale Trade	\$516.74	\$514.80	\$498.34	35.2	36.0	35.8	\$14.68	\$14.30	\$13.92
Retail Trade	\$260.72	\$251.78	\$245.97	27.3	26.9	27.0	\$9.55	\$9.36	\$9.11

DATA PREPARED IN COOPERATION WITH THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

* These average earnings are computed on a gross basis and reflect changes in premium pay for overtime and late shift work as well as changes in basic hourly and incentive wage.



PANHANDLE

BENEWAH, BONNER, BOUNDARY, KOOTENAI, & SHOSHONE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The Panhandle's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate jumped from 7.8 percent in February to 8.6 percent in March, following the closure of the Sunshine Mine near Kellogg and a few layoffs at several lumber, electronics, and retail employers. Spring break-up was in full force in March, so load limitations and closures of muddy forest roads kept many loggers out of the woods. In addition, layoffs by Spokane employers put some Panhandle residents out of work.

The losses of 210 silver mining jobs and 370 *Lumber & Wood Products* jobs explain why the unemployment rate in March 2001 was five-tenths of a percentage point higher than in the same month the year before. Although electronics firms, durable goods manufacturers, temporary employment firms, catalog companies, and developers of software and Internet applications laid off workers in the last few months, their recent job losses have not erased the gains they made before the economy began slowing. Therefore, their employment levels in March 2001 were slightly higher than their employment levels in March 2000.

Although the economic news was generally gloomy, Kootenai County had one highly promising event to celebrate. Center Partners added 300 *Service* jobs between February and March, when it opened a customer service center in Coeur d'Alene. Center Partners expects to hire another 200 workers before the end of June. The Coeur d'Alene center serves a single client—AT&T Broadband. From their office at 1201 Ironwood Drive, Center Partner employees answer customer questions about AT&T Broadband services.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonner County

- Dewey and Maxine Kock recently opened Dewey's New & Used at 1410 N. Boyer Avenue in Sandpoint.

Panhandle Table 1: Labor Force & Employment

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	90,190	89,580	87,380	0.7	3.2
Unemployed	7,800	6,980	7,040	11.7	10.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	8.6	7.8	8.1		
Total Employment	82,390	82,600	80,340	-0.3	2.6
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	89,500	88,520	86,600	1.1	3.3
Unemployed	10,540	9,840	9,590	7.1	9.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	11.8	11.1	11.1		
Total Employment	78,960	78,680	77,010	0.4	2.5
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**					
Goods-Producing Industries	13,160	13,410	13,500	-1.9	-2.5
Mining	790	940	1,000	-16.0	-21.0
Construction	4,020	3,930	3,980	2.3	1.0
Manufacturing	8,350	8,540	8,520	-2.2	-2.0
Lumber & Wood Products	3,760	3,960	4,130	-5.1	-9.0
All Other Manufacturing	4,590	4,580	4,390	0.2	4.6
Service-Producing Industries	51,220	50,930	49,670	0.6	3.1
Transportation	1,430	1,430	1,300	0.0	10.0
Communication & Utilities	1,070	1,060	1,080	0.9	-0.9
Wholesale Trade	2,210	2,220	2,230	-0.5	-0.9
Retail Trade	14,440	14,480	14,240	-0.3	1.4
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	2,520	2,500	2,430	0.8	3.7
Service & Miscellaneous	16,240	15,990	15,560	1.6	4.4
Government Administration	7,710	7,640	7,460	0.9	3.4
Government Education	5,600	5,610	5,370	-0.2	4.3

* Preliminary estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

The store offers a wide variety of items including power tools, welding torches, telephones, radios, clothing, glassware, and household items.

- Co-Op Energy LLC, a joint venture of Sandpoint's electric utility Northern Lights and Co-Op Country Store, recently opened to sell and distribute propane in Bonner, Boundary, and Kootenai counties. The propane company is located at 125 Tibbetts Lane in Sandpoint.
- Art: Heart & Soul opened at the Bonner Mall in Ponderay. The gallery's owner, Patrick Yesh, provides gallery and studio space for artists, teaches painting and drawing classes, offers massage therapy, and presents seminars on creativity and health.
- Nina Deabenderfer recently opened T & N Siding Supply Co. at 4200 McGhee Road, Building #6, in Sandpoint. The new business sells vinyl siding, windows, and related products.
- Verizon is closing its Sandpoint phone mart at the end of May. The retail and payment center, which employs three people, is one of eight phone centers Verizon is closing in the Northwest.

Kootenai County

- Parrott Mechanical, the Panhandle's largest construction firm, laid off 75 employees in April. Prior to the layoff, Parrott employed more than 200 people at 6600 N. Government Way in Coeur d'Alene. It also has offices in Sandpoint and Osburn. After a change in ownership, its parent company decided that Parrott should focus on its core services of heating and cooling. In recent years, Parrott also has provided plumbing and electrical service. In addition, residential work formerly handled by Parrott's North Idaho offices now will be handled by the Spokane office of its parent company, Service Express.
- Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway started construction of its \$30 million locomotive refueling depot at Hauser Lake near Rathdrum. Lydig Construction Co., of Spokane, is the main contractor for the construction project that is expected to employ 150 people. When the depot opens in early 2003, it will employ up to 75 people.
- Coeur d'Alene Mayor Steve Judy and his wife Michelle are preparing for the May 19 grand opening of Adventures 'n Fun, a two-acre entertainment complex with an 18-hole miniature golf course, a carousel, a play castle, laser tag, bouncing pads, bumper cars, robotic entertainers, and a wide variety of games. The entertainment complex's 60 employees will wear safari garb in keeping with the jungle motif. Round Table Pizza will cater meals at Adventures 'n Fun, located near Highway 95 in north Coeur d'Alene.
- A \$4 million reconstruction of Coeur d'Alene Airport's main runway recently began and will be completed by late fall. During the construction at the airport owned by Kootenai County airplanes will use a second, shorter runway.
- Hecla Mining, based in Coeur d'Alene, recently sold its industrial minerals division, which primarily mined ball clay and Kaolin. Hecla decided to concentrate on silver and gold, which it mines at the Lucky Friday mine in Shoshone County, and underground mines in Alaska and Venezuela. Approximately 75 people work at Hecla's corporate headquarters across Highway 95 from the Silver Lake Mall.
- Kootenai County recently welcomed these new businesses: Rent-a-Center, a 4,700-square-foot store that rents and sells home furnishings, electronics, and appliances, at 101 Appleway in Coeur d'Alene; Comet, a 1,020-square-foot store selling men's and women's clothing at the Silver Lake Mall in Coeur d'Alene; Aspen Sound, a car stereo store at 350 Cherry Lane in Coeur d'Alene; R & D Towing Service, a 24-hour towing and mobile welding business,

in Athol; Westwood Gardens, a nursery selling trees, plants, and garden art, located behind Super 1 Foods in Rathdrum; Idaho Joe's, a second-hand store featuring furnishings, household items, and collectibles from the 1950s through the 1970s, at 810 N. Fourth Street in Coeur d'Alene; and a Great Harvest Bakery franchise, specializing in whole-grain breads, at 2106 N. Government Way.

Shoshone County

- A Papa Murphy's take-and-bake pizza shop opened in late March at 403 Bunker Avenue in downtown Kellogg. The business, owned by George and Nelda House, employs three people.
- The Bank of Latah plans to open a branch in Wallace late this spring. Established in 1890 in Tekoa, Washington, the bank has a growing presence in North Idaho. It opened a branch in Kellogg last September.
- Global Credit Union of Spokane plans to open a full-service branch in the Yoke's supermarket in Coeur d'Alene. When it opens in early June, the branch will employ four people. The Kellogg Global Credit Union will be the fifth Global Credit Union branch in Idaho.
- For six weeks in late winter, Kellogg hosted a film production crew shooting a low-budget horror movie. "Shredder" is a snowboarding horror flick, so much of the action was set on Silver Mountain Resort. Motels and restaurants welcomed the extra dollars brought by the film crews, and a few locals worked as extras on the movie.
- This summer, Superfund projects will provide 200 to 300 jobs for Silver Valley residents. One familiar summer Superfund activity is remediation of lawns. Since 1994, crews have removed contaminated soil from hundreds of homes and replaced it with new soil. This spring, workers will begin final capping of the impoundment area that holds most of the contamination removed from the 21-square-mile Superfund site. In addition, crews will be planting more grass, shrubs, and trees. The Superfund projects endeavor to remove a century's accumulation of mining and smelter waste. The completion of the Superfund project will improve the county's long-term potential for tourism and industrial recruitment.

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SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Seaport Table 1, the Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March remained unchanged from at February's rate of 4.4 percent. In March 2000, the rate was 3.6 percent. Total employment decreased 150 from February and 1,100 from March of last year. March total unemployed remained unchanged from February's level, but was up 250 from March 2000. The good news is that weather in March was mild, which is unusual but allowed outdoor work in construction and agriculture to continue. Traditionally, March is a month when outdoor work is sluggish.

In March, Seaport's *Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment* decreased by 160 jobs from February 2001; from March 2000 the decrease was even larger at 670. Decreases from last month and last year occurred in almost all industries. Only two industries, *Finance, Insurance & Real Estate* and *Government*, posted increases. However, these increases were so slight that they were nearly covered up by the rounding process.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

Unemployment Insurance

Stabilizing the Economy: Besides helping unemployed individuals and families transition from one job to another, Unemployment Insurance (UI) acts as an automatic economic stabilizer. In a recession, UI benefits offset some of the effects of job losses on a community's spending power. Because UI benefits allow unemployed individuals and their families to continue to pay their bills, it helps maintain incomes and spending power of the stores, landlords, banks, and service providers in the community. UI softens the blow and reduces the snowball effect of job losses.

Retaining a Local Workforce: Unemployment Insurance promotes stability by making it possible for employers to retain workers during the off-season or during a short downturn. Many seasonal industries would find it much more difficult to attract and retain employees if their workers could not rely on UI to support them through the off-season.

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Washington

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	33,780	33,930	34,630	-0.4	-2.5
Unemployment	1,480	1,480	1,230	0.0	20.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4	4.4	3.6		
Total Employment	32,300	32,450	33,400	-0.5	-3.3
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	34,450	34,900	34,910	-1.3	-1.3
Unemployment	1,820	1,990	1,510	-8.5	20.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	5.3	5.7	4.3		
Total Employment	32,630	32,910	33,400	-0.9	-2.3
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**					
Goods-Producing Industries	4,980	5,140	5,330	-3.1	-6.6
Mining & Construction	1,190	1,210	1,190	-1.7	0.0
Manufacturing	3,790	3,930	4,140	-3.6	-8.5
Food Processing	70	70	120	0.0	-41.7
Lumber & Wood Products	710	740	800	-4.1	-11.3
Paper Products	1,710	1,780	1,830	-3.9	-6.6
All Other Manufacturing	1,300	1,340	1,390	-3.0	-6.5
Service-Producing Industries	20,300	20,300	20,620	0.0	-1.6
Transportation	1,350	1,360	1,320	-0.7	2.3
Communications & Utilities	290	290	300	0.0	-3.3
Wholesale Trade	930	940	970	-1.1	-4.1
Retail Trade	5,130	5,110	5,260	0.4	-2.5
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,410	1,440	1,420	-2.1	-0.7
Services	6,800	6,830	7,070	-0.4	-3.8
Government Administration	1,870	1,850	1,760	1.1	6.3
Government Education	2,520	2,480	2,520	1.6	0.0
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Clearwater County

- Communities located along the trail used by the Lewis-Clark expedition are getting ready to celebrate the expedition's bicentennial. The Pink Hole House, an 18-unit public campground situated three miles west of Orofino on U.S. Highway 12, is one of the first of many planned campgrounds to be completed. The Pink House Hole campground will provide full hook-ups for 15 RV's, three tent campsites, and two picnic area pavilions. The campground is half a mile from Canoe Camp, where the Lewis-Clark party stopped to make dugout canoes for their trip downriver to the Pacific. Over two million people are expected to tour North Central Idaho for the bicentennial.
- Verizon Communication has installed a new digital switch as part of a \$2 million project to revamp the local telephone network and provide more services to customers. The new switch was activated in April, and is expected to provide faster, more reliable telephone service to the 4,000 cus-

tomers lines in Orofino's 476 prefix. Verizon is planning a similar conversion in Peck, for the 250 customers with the 486 prefix. "This newer generation of digital technology will improve the quality of service for our Orofino and Peck customers and strengthen the area's potential for economic growth," said Darin French, Verizon's local manager based in Moscow.

Idaho County

- The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved construction of a fiber-optic line that will close the gap between southern and northern Idaho. Citizens Telecommunications plans to build the fiber-optic route between Riggins and Grangeville, pending completion of the sale of eight local telephone exchanges from Qwest to Citizens. The sale is expected to close late summer or early fall. The commission said the cost of building the fiber-optic line, estimated to be \$3.8 million, will be paid from a portion of the gain on the sale of exchanges in Cottonwood, Craigmont, Grangeville, Kamiah, Kooskia, Lapwai, Nezperce, and Lewiston. There is no connection now between those eight exchanges and Southern Idaho. All calls south are currently routed to Spokane and then to Boise.
- Construction has begun on a new USDA Agriculture Service Center in Grangeville. Earth moving and site preparation at the former Mini Con on U.S. 95 is making way for the new center which will house four offices—Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Idaho County Soil, and Water Conservation District, Rural Development.
- A salvage deal has been reached with a Montana company for the ties and rails of the approximate 67-mile Camas Prairie RailNet (CPR) line between Spalding and Grangeville. Klamert Railroad Salvage Company of Silesia Montana will conduct the contract salvage for an undisclosed amount. Work is pending —CPR's meeting the requirements, which were set up by the Surface Transportation Board in its decision, last fall to approve abandonment of the line. The bridges and trestles are not a part of this salvage deal.

Latah County

- Horizon will increase service to the Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport. More comfortable and larger aircrafts will replace the 37-seat commuter planes currently being used by Horizon. The new aircraft seats 70 passengers, have more legroom, and are quieter. With a top speed of 420 mph, the planes are almost as fast as a jet. The bottom line for passengers is flights will be shorter. Horizon will also be adding some new equipment to the airport, such as a conveyor belt baggage loader.

Lewis County

- The new Kamiah Physical Therapy Clinic has opened and is taking patients. The clinic is administered by St. Mary's Hospital (Cottonwood) Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Department. The clinic is wheelchair accessible, and has a modern array of therapy and aerobic machines.

Nez Perce County

- The Regence Group has announced plans to create at least 100 new jobs and will become the anchor tenant in Lewiston's new business and technology park. The newly created positions will be primarily for health insurance claim analysts. The Regence Group, parent company of Lewiston-based Regence BlueShield of Idaho, will begin hiring for the new claims processing business in June. The company's decision to build in Lewiston's new technology and business park north of Thain Grade secures grant money needed to complete construction of the entire business park. Recruitment and hiring will begin in June, with training conducted at an interim site until a new building is completed (summer of 2002) at the technology and business park.
- Within days of the Regence announcement, Tele-Servicing Innovations (TSI) announced plans to hire 250 people to work in a contact center that will open later this year in Lewiston's new business and technology park. Employees at the contact center will respond to customer e-mail, engage in live Web chats and make phone contacts on behalf of major companies such as HBO and Time Warner Cable. Beginning wages at the contact center will be in the \$9 to \$10 per hour range. In addition, 30 or so management positions that pay up to \$65,000 per year will be filled locally.
- In April, Idaho's Governor Dirk Kempthorne visited Lewiston to sign three appropriation bills. The first appropriation will pay the salaries for 45 people to operate the new Idaho Juvenile Corrections Department's Lewiston Center located on the City's southern edge. The facility will gear up in the next couple of months and is expecting the first of 36 prisoners—males aged 10 to 20, judged to be moderate to high risk—to arrive July 10. The second and third appropriations signed were for a new gymnasium and activities Center at Lewis-Clark State College's new gymnasium and activities Center and for refurbishing and expanding the interpretive center at Hell's Gate State Park's refurbished and expanded interpretive center.
- In concluding this month's development section, a new sporting goods store in Lewiston is reeling in customers in search of fly fishing equipment, and muzzle loading and archery supplies. Mark Lamb has opened The Traditional Sportsman at 814 Main Street. The store is next to Hills Valley Floral and Gifts, which is operated by his wife Gayla.

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TREASURE VALLEY

ADA, ADAMS, BOISE, CANYON, ELMORE, GEM, OWYHEE, PAYETTE, VALLEY, & WASHINGTON COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Boise City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was 3.1 percent for March 2001, as shown in Treasure Valley Table 1. This rate was one-tenth of a percentage point above the February 2001 rate of 3.0 percent, but was down three-tenths of a percentage point from March 2000. There was an increase in the number of employed individuals, from 233,500 to 235,700, and in increase in the number of unemployed individuals, from 7,200 to 7,600. The net increase in the *Civilian Labor Force* was 2,600 from February 2001 to March 2001. Treasure Valley Table 2 shows the March 2001 labor force figures for all counties in Southwest Idaho.

**Treasure Valley Table 2: March 2001
Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Figures
for Southwest Idaho Counties**

	Civilian Labor Force	Number Unempl.	Percent Unempl.	Number Empl.
Ada	175,893	4,587	2.6	171,306
Adams	1,573	205	13.0	1,368
Boise	2,339	113	4.8	2,226
Canyon	67,385	2,974	4.4	64,411
Elmore	9,467	559	5.9	8,908
Gem	6,337	353	5.6	5,984
Owyhee	4,024	163	4.0	3,861
Payette	10,479	778	7.4	9,701
Valley	4,150	308	7.4	3,842
Washington	4,751	386	8.1	4,365
Statewide	673,258	30,899	4.6	642,359

The number of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* grew by 2,100 between February and March 2001, and grew by 10,400 since March 2000. *Goods-Producing Industries* gained 400 jobs over the month. Job gains in *Construction & Mining* (500 jobs) outpaced job losses in *Manufacturing* (100 jobs), with job losses noted in *Industrial & Commercial Machinery & Computer Equipment* (100 jobs), *Other Durable Goods* (100 jobs), and *Food & Kindred Products* (200 jobs). Job gains in *Manufacturing* included *Other Lumber & Wood Products* (100 jobs) and *Electronic & Other Electrical Equipment &*

**Treasure Valley Table 1: Boise MSA Labor Force & Employment
(Ada and Canyon counties)**

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change Last Month	% Change Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	243,300	240,700	230,900	1.1	5.4
Unemployment	7,600	7,200	7,900	5.6	-3.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.1	3.0	3.4		
Total Employment	235,700	233,500	223,000	0.9	5.7
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	243,600	240,300	231,300	1.4	5.3
Unemployment	8,200	8,700	8,500	-5.7	-3.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.4	3.6	3.7		
Total Employment	235,400	231,600	222,800	1.6	5.7
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	227,900	225,800	217,500	0.9	4.8
GOODS-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	52,800	52,400	51,800	0.8	1.9
Mining & Construction	15,600	15,100	15,200	3.3	2.6
Manufacturing	37,200	37,300	36,600	-0.3	1.6
Durable Goods	28,900	28,800	28,200	0.3	2.5
Lumber & Wood Products	3,200	3,100	3,500	3.2	-8.6
Wood Buildings & Mobile Homes	700	700	1,000	0.0	-30.0
Other Lumber & Wood Products	2,500	2,400	2,500	4.2	0.0
Fabricated Metal Products	1,200	1,200	1,200	0.0	0.0
Ind. & Comm. Mach. & Computer Equip.	8,100	8,200	7,900	-1.2	2.5
Electronic & Other Elect. Equip. & Comp.	12,800	12,600	11,700	1.6	9.4
Transportation Equipment	1,700	1,700	2,000	0.0	-15.0
Other Durable Goods	1,900	2,000	1,900	-5.0	0.0
Nondurable Goods	8,300	8,500	8,400	-2.4	-1.2
Food Products	5,400	5,600	5,600	-3.6	-3.6
Canned Cured & Frozen Foods	1,700	1,700	1,800	0.0	-5.6
Printing, Pub & Allied Products	2,000	2,000	1,900	0.0	5.3
Other Nondurable Goods	900	900	900	0.0	0.0
SERVICE-PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	175,100	173,400	165,700	1.0	5.7
Trans, Comm, & Public Util	12,000	12,000	11,700	0.0	2.6
Transportation	6,800	6,800	6,300	0.0	7.9
Comm & Elec, Gas & Sanitary Services	5,200	5,200	5,400	0.0	-3.7
Trade	57,100	56,800	53,100	0.5	7.5
Wholesale Trade	14,000	14,000	13,200	0.0	6.1
Durable Goods	8,600	8,600	7,900	0.0	8.9
Nondurable Goods	5,400	5,400	5,300	0.0	1.9
Retail Trade	43,100	42,800	39,900	0.7	8.0
General Merchandise Stores	6,000	5,800	4,100	3.4	46.3
Foods Stores	7,700	7,800	7,500	-1.3	2.7
Eating & Drinking Places	14,800	14,400	14,300	2.8	3.5
Other Retail Trade	14,600	14,800	14,000	-1.4	4.3
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	11,000	11,000	11,100	0.0	-0.9
Services	60,100	58,900	56,400	2.0	6.6
Business Services	14,900	14,400	14,400	3.5	3.5
Health Services	17,000	17,100	16,100	-0.6	5.6
Hospitals	7,900	7,800	7,300	1.3	8.2
Eng., Acct., Res., Mngmt., & Related	4,800	4,700	4,300	2.1	11.6
Other Services	23,400	22,700	21,600	3.1	8.3
Government	34,900	34,700	33,400	0.6	4.5
Federal Government	4,800	4,900	4,900	-2.0	-2.0
State Government	13,200	13,000	12,400	1.5	6.5
Education	4,600	4,600	4,200	0.0	9.5
Administration	8,600	8,400	8,200	2.4	4.9
Local Government	16,900	16,800	16,100	0.6	5.0
Education	11,300	11,200	10,800	0.9	4.6
Administration	5,600	5,600	5,300	0.0	5.7

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

Components (200 jobs). Since March 2000, the only industries that did not experience an increase in the number of jobs were *Wood Buildings & Mobile Home Manufacturing* and *Food & Kindred Products Manufacturing*; all other *Goods-Producing Industries* experienced a gain over the year. The increase in *Goods-Producing Industries* accounted for 19 percent of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* added over the month and 9.6 percent of the jobs created over the year.

Service-Producing Industries added 1,700 jobs in the Boise City MSA from February 2001 to March 2001. The only industries that accrued a loss over the month were *Food Stores* (100 jobs), *Health Services* (100 jobs), and *Federal Government* (100 jobs); all other *Service-Producing Industries* gained jobs over the month. The industries that posted the most job gains over the month were *Eating & Drinking Places* (400 jobs), *Business Services* (500 jobs), and *Other Services* (700 jobs). Since March 2000, the only industries that did not experience a gain in *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* were *Communication & Electricity*, *Gas & Sanitary Services*, and *Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate*. The increase in *Service-Producing Industries* accounted for 81 percent of *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* added over the month and 90.4 percent of jobs created over the year.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

High-Tech Industry Update

The numbers of persons laid-off from high-tech companies (including temporary workers) has increased to almost 2,000 workers. Companies that have laid-off workers include ZiLOG, Micronpc.com, MCMS, Micron Electronics (MEI), SCP Global Technologies, Jabil Circuit, and Hewlett-Packard. MEI also announced the sale of Micronpc.com to Gores Technology Group, a private Los Angeles company. Gores Technology Group was paid \$70 million by Micron Electronics to take over the company and turn it around. The company has purchased nearly 30 companies or divisions in the past and often resells the companies to bigger players in the market once it has gotten the company back to profitability. MEI is also entitled to profits raised on the sale of the company if Gores sells all or part of Micronpc.com in the next three years. MEI also announced plans to sell its PC and SpecTek divisions and merge with Interland to focus solely on Web-hosting. The merger with Interland is expected to be complete this summer. MEI sold its Host-Pro consumer dial-up Internet accounts to EarthLink, an Atlanta-based Internet service provider. MEI chose to sell its consumer accounts because it no longer fits with the company's focus on Web-hosting solutions for small and medium-sized businesses.

In other high-tech news, Knosys, Inc. changed its name to ProClarity Corp. Company officials announced the name change as a step to align the company closer to its product line. The ProClarity product line was launched in January 1999. ProClarity makes software to

help companies analyze business data that are collected and added to databases, which allows decision-makers to see trends, patterns, and exceptions in large groups of data.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Boise City MSA

- Albertson's, Inc. announced Larry Johnston as its new chairman and chief executive officer. Larry Johnston is a former CEO of the Appliance Division of General Electric (GE), and also has expertise in handling mergers and acquisitions.
- Washington Group International, Inc. (WGI) was awarded many contracts in the past few months, including: a \$30 million contract to reconstruct a 22-mile section of State Route 40 in California that should be completed in early 2002; an \$18 million contract to construct improvements to a water-delivery system in Nevada that is scheduled for completion in August; and a contract for an undisclosed amount to provide construction services for the five-year renovation of the Great Falls International Airport.
- Sears Credit has announced plans to hire 400 new workers, an increase of 25 percent of its existing workforce. The new employees will support the growing Sears Card and Sears Gold MasterCard businesses. Wages for online employees start at \$9.50 per hour, management-level positions are also available.
- Home Base, the home-improvement store located at 8363 Franklin Road in the Franklin Towne Plaza, is one of the 26 Home Base stores that will be closing in the next few weeks. In late March, the company announced the 11-week liquidation of products at the store.
- George's Cycles & Fitness opened its new location in April on Front Street across from WinCo in Boise. The new 8,500 square-foot store marked the closure of the store on Broadway Avenue and the store in the Albertson's Marketplace on 17th and State Street. The business will keep its store at 5515 West State Street open. The move towards fewer, larger stores will allow the company to offer more products and services to its customers, including laser custom fitting. George's also plans to open a Meridian store in November.
- Sprint PCS recently expanded its digital network to include the Treasure Valley, from Ontario to the east side of Glenns Ferry. The firm also opened its first Treasure Valley retail stores in Meridian and Boise.

- Eagle Nursery is planning to move to the northeast corner of State Street and Park Lane, west of Eagle Road. The Towne and Country Centre—a plaza that will include a WinCo supermarket, a home-improvement store, a gas station, and 11 additional retail outlets and restaurants will be coming soon to Horseshoe Bend Road and State Street, where Eagle Nursery currently resides. This development, and the desire to modernize the nursery, prompted their move.
- D&D Idaho Foods is building a combination KFC and A&W Restaurant in Caldwell at 5102 Cleveland Boulevard, next to WalMart. The 3,500 square-foot restaurant is currently under construction and is scheduled to open June 1. The combined restaurant will be the first in Idaho.
- Many other new businesses opened in recent months in the Treasure Valley, including: Soshea's Café in Caldwell; NAPA Auto Parts and Leavitt & Associates Engineers, both in Nampa; Louie's Pizza & Italian Restaurant, Perfect Image Beauty Supply & Gifts, Smoky Mountain Pizza & Pasta, and Summers Funeral Home, all in Meridian.
- Maverick Country Stores, Inc. has started construction on a new 3,800 square-foot store on the southeast corner of Franklin Boulevard and Karcher Road. Construction and remodeling projects have also started on Ross at Karcher Mall. Ross Dress for Less will be an anchor store on the west end of Karcher Mall and is scheduled to open by August 15. Intermountain Outdoor Sports closed its Karcher Mall location in April due to poor sales and a dispute over the mall lease.
- The West Valley Centre, a new 40,000 square-foot shopping center, started construction on Nampa-Caldwell Boulevard recently. Sears will be the anchor store in the new center, moving from its current location in Karcher Mall. The first 20,000 square-foot section is scheduled for completion by October.
- The corner of Flamingo Avenue and Garrity Boulevard has three new commercial construction projects started or scheduled. Construction has started on the new McDonald's restaurant and Phillips 66 gas station and convenience store, and construction should begin on a new premier office building, North Ridge Professional Center, in June at the same location.
- Canandaigua Wine Co., Inc. acquired Ste. Chapelle Winery in a \$52 million deal with Corus Brands, Inc. (who purchased Ste. Chapelle in 1997) in late March.

Canandaigua is the wine division for Constellation Brands, the second-largest supplier of wine and importer of beer in the United States. The acquisition would allow a larger distribution channel for Ste. Chapelle.

- Planned moves and new business openings in the coming months will include: Desert Sage Restaurant is moving to ParkCenter; Idaho Camera is closing its Overland store in Boise and opening a new store in Nampa; MacKenzie River Pizza and Syringa will open in the Crossroads Plaza in Meridian; World Lighting will open a retail store next to Lowe's in southwest Boise; the Manhattan Grill will open at the Adelman Building in downtown Boise in June; Schott's Steaks & Chops restaurant will open in the Idanha Hotel building in downtown Boise; Red Lobster will close its Capitol Boulevard location and reopen a restaurant in the Boise Towne Plaza in October; and C.J. Banks plans to open a clothing retail store at Boise Towne Square Mall.

Adams County

- The Sawtooth Café reopened in mid-April after a remodel. The restaurant is now larger and brighter; it seats 50 instead of 31. The kitchen was moved farther back and in its place booths and tables were added for customers. Other projects are continuing, but the café is open and the hours have been expanded from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and it is also open for dinner both Friday and Saturday evenings until 9:00 p.m. (10:00 p.m. in the late spring and summer).

Boise County

- Bogus Basin Ski Resort has closed for the season but work has already started on a new electric line that will deliver power to the mountain to add new and faster chairlifts and expand resort operations. The power line is being constructed this summer. Other improvements in the near future include improving lodges and skier services, upgrading the Superior chairlift from a double to a high-speed quad, and building a high-speed quad chairlift—Shafer Butte—up the face of the mountain.

Elmore County

- The Pilot truck stop will reopen on May 14 with an Arby's restaurant that will include a drive-thru, replacing the Great American restaurant. The truck stop has already started the hiring process for 55 jobs that will fill the restaurant, convenience store, and fueling stations. All of the application/job information is available at the Mountain Home Job Service. The grand reopening is scheduled for May 14.

Gem County

- The following business developments occurred in Gem County during the month of April: the Gem County Fair Office recently completed its \$4,800 remodeling project; the Post Office moved recently to its new home on Main Street; and work on the Gem Island Sports Complex is slowing down, with the fields ready for play the first phase of the trail complete.
- A modular jail arrived in Gem County in mid-April. The modular facility will be placed near the existing Gem County Jail and will provide beds for up to 12 minimum-security inmates. The new modular facility should eliminate the need for the county to send inmates to facilities in other counties, saving the county money.

Payette County

- Recent business developments in Payette County include: the grand opening for Pine Pride, a custom furniture company that moved its operation to 34 S. Seventh St. in Payette; the construction of a new greenhouse at Howards Landscape and Nursery in Fruitland began in late March; and a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the Farmers and Merchants State Bank site in Fruitland.

Valley County

- In April, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) awarded \$20,000 to the City of McCall for water system planning. The grant will be matched by the city and the total monies will be used to update the city's master water plan and determine cost estimates for future system improvements.
- Declining enrollments in area schools are forcing teacher layoffs in the McCall-Donnelly School District. As many as 14 teachers could be laid-off from the District, and the eliminated positions are based on seniority. The district also decided to close the one-room school in Yellow-Pine for the 2001-02 school year, after enrollment this year fell to only two students.

Washington County

- The Weiser Memorial Hospital Foundation received a \$50,000 grant in early April from the R.K. Mellon Family Foundation, to assist in Memorial Hospital's capital equipment campaign. Some of the money was used to purchase a new x-ray film processor. The Radiology Department's previous film processor was about 30 years old and frequently needed repairs.

- Recent business openings and closures in Washington County in the past month include the following: Salomon Smith Barney, a financial consulting firm, opened an office in Weiser and Stark's Eclectic Gifts, located at the corner of State and Idaho Streets in Weiser, is going out of business.

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MAGIC VALLEY

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA, & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

As seen in Magic Valley Table 1, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Magic Valley LMA was 3.7 percent for March 2001. This was one-tenth of percentage point less than February 2001 and five-tenths of a percentage point less than March 2000.

The *Civilian Labor Force* was 2.4 percent higher in March 2001 than in March 2000 and employment continues to be very strong. Over the past year, *Food Processing* had a 2.6 percent increase. Some of the notable decreases in the last year include an 8.0 percent decline in *Retail Trade*, a 12.5 percent decrease in *Manufacturing-Durable Goods*, and a 3.5 percent drop in *Wholesale Trade*. Some new eating establishments opened in Twin Falls in the past 60 days, and these helped contribute to modest gains in the *Services* sectors from last year. Overall, unemployment remains at very low levels and job creation continues.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

South Central Agricultural Outlook

The outlook for agriculture in all of Idaho and the South Central region shows a little improvement in some areas, but an uncertain future in most of the agricultural sectors. The bright spot so far has been in cattle and milk production. The supply of beef in the nation and the world has been dwindling, keeping prices stable. The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in Europe and the subsequent destruction of many cattle has caused prices to increase dramatically. After months of sagging milk prices, consumer demand for dairy products is starting to outweigh industry production. According to a report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Services, March Class III milk prices came in at \$11.42 per hundredweight, up \$1.15 from February and up \$1.88 from a year before. The outlook is for a continued price rise. Other meat industries including sheep,

Magic Valley Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding counties

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	49,090	49,060	47,930	0.1	2.4
Unemployment	1,830	1,880	2,010	-2.7	-9.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	3.8	4.2		
Total Employment	47,260	47,180	45,920	0.2	2.9
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	47,420	47,110	46,350	0.7	2.3
Unemployment	2,080	2,400	2,300	-13.3	-9.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.4	5.1	5.0		
Total Employment	45,340	44,710	44,050	1.4	2.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**					
Goods-Producing Industries	6,740	6,620	6,810	1.8	-1.0
Mining & Construction	1,860	1,760	1,870	5.7	-0.5
Manufacturing	4,880	4,860	4,940	0.4	-1.2
Durable Goods	770	770	880	0.0	-12.5
Nondurable Goods	4,110	4,090	4,060	0.5	1.2
Food Processing	3,110	3,090	3,030	0.6	2.6
All Other Nondurable Goods	1,000	1,000	1,030	0.0	-2.9
Service-Producing Industries	30,070	30,010	30,190	0.2	-0.4
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,970	2,980	2,820	-0.3	5.3
Wholesale Trade	2,220	2,220	2,300	0.0	-3.5
Retail Trade	7,350	7,330	7,990	0.3	-8.0
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,390	1,440	1,400	-3.5	-0.7
Services	8,600	8,600	8,370	0.0	2.7
Government Administration	3,680	3,650	3,450	0.8	6.7
Government Education	3,860	3,790	3,860	1.8	0.0

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

hogs, and poultry also look fairly stable. If an economic downturn occurs, seafood and fish demand typically goes down due to higher prices for these products. This could have an impact on the Magic Valley's aquaculture industry. Price forecasts for sugar beets and potatoes remain very poor with huge surpluses and decreased demand. Some help may come from decreased crop plantings due to acres taken out of production by Idaho Power Company's power buyback. In addition, many farmers are switching to shorter growing season crops such as small grains and hay because of severe drought conditions but the effect will be small. Dry bean plantings are expected to be 17 percent lower nationwide, and this might stabilize a downward trend in those prices.

The outlook for farm labor should be about average to slightly below average, but some farmers are not hiring laborers this year because of the power buyback or farm liquidation. The Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker season is also not expected to be as long because of severe drought condi-

tions and many farmers will, of necessity, be through with their irrigation season earlier than normal.

This last winter saw the second worst water year since record keeping began (1977 was the worst year). Salmon Falls drainage and the Magic Reservoir irrigation areas are expected to have a maximum of 30-45 days of irrigation water. This has spurred Blaine and Lincoln counties to apply for drought disaster area assistance. All of this, coupled with a proposed rate hike by Idaho Power Company, makes farming an uncertain prospect in the Magic Valley in 2001.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Twin Falls County

- Many South Central Idaho farmers participated in Idaho Power Company's power buyback program. In the entire region, 56,702 acres out of a total irrigated area of 1,117,011 acres will be taken out of production to save power costs. This represents 5.08 percent of all irrigated farmland in seven South Central counties. Some farmers in Idaho will receive as much as fifteen cents per kilowatt-hour of energy saved. Farmers who could cut at least 100,000-kilowatt hours of electricity during this year's irrigation season were eligible. In total, 154,439 acres in Idaho will be affected, saving Idaho Power nearly one-half billion-kilowatt hours.
- Micron CEO Steve Appleton was the featured speaker at the Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce First Friday luncheon on April 6th at the Turf Club in Twin Falls. Mr. Appleton later participated in a round table discussion with local business leaders at the College of Southern Idaho. The discussion was mainly centered on economic development and how the Twin Falls-Jerome region could recruit viable businesses into the area.

Blaine, Camas, Jerome, Gooding & Lincoln Counties

- SkyWest Airlines announced that it plans to increase the number of its daily round-trip flights between Hailey and Salt Lake City, Utah from seven to eleven flights. The new flights will be from June to September because of Sun Valley's heavy summer tourist traffic and its increased popularity as a summer recreation area. The new flights will begin June 2001.
- Governor Kempthorne has signed four new dairy bills that will have an impact on Idaho dairy operations:
 1. *Senate Bill 1040 requires dairies that sell animal waste for application onto cropland to provide the*

buyers' names and addresses in their nutrient management plans.

2. *Senate Bill 1067 requires a new or expanding dairy to provide evidence to state regulators and county planners of an adequate water right before a site or milk permit can be issued.*
 3. *House Bill 211 allows a county to ask the state to form a site advisory team when trying to permit a new operation.*
 4. *House Bill 262, also known as the Odor Management Act, gives the Department of Agriculture the authority to control dairy odors through regulation of waste lagoon construction and the development of odor management programs.*
- St. Benedicts Hospital in Jerome will install a new CT Scanner this month. This new Spiral CT Scanner will be the area's most advanced type of CT radiological equipment. The new scanner uses a scanning technique called "Helical Scan" to obtain outstanding clinical results. It is used to perform radiological scans along the entire body axis including scans of veins, organs, musculoskeletal and pulmonary systems. Its diagnostic abilities will be used for everything from traumatic injuries, appendicitis, bowel and bronchial obstructions, to all types of vascular studies.

Cassia and Minidoka Counties

- A celebration was held in Burley to commemorate the opening of the new four-lane bridge over the Snake River. The project, which has taken many months to complete, was celebrated with a parade, fireworks, and boats on the river. Governor Dirk Kempthorne was present to cut the ribbon and show his support for the project. The new bridge will help traffic flow into and out of downtown Burley and make travel safer and easier.

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SOUTHEAST IDAHO

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA, & POWER COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

In March 2001, the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped one-tenth of a percentage point to 4.1 percent. Although March was a cold and wet month, the number of individuals who were employed increased by 170 to 38,910 and the number of individuals who were unemployed decreased by 40 to 1,660. Seasonal related activities contributed to increased employment in March. Contractors were able to begin building houses, and special events throughout the month required increased employment in retail outlets and lodging facilities. The area unemployment rate was five-tenths of a percentage point lower than the state rate of 4.6 percent and two-tenths of a percentage point lower than the U.S. rate of 4.3 percent. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was a full percentage point lower than March 2000.

The job situation improved in March, despite a return to winter-like weather conditions. Southeast Idaho Table 1 shows Nonfarm Payroll Jobs, in the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area, grew by 250 in March 2001 from February 2001. Most job growth occurred in *Construction* and *Services*, a normal growth pattern for this time of year. In the *Goods-Producing Industries*, *Construction* gained 40 jobs in March, mainly in *Special Trades Contractors*. *Manufacturing* remained the same as in February at 3,000 jobs. Most increases in March occurred in the *Service-Producing Industries*, which gained 210 jobs. Special events, such as the Simplot Games, Dodge National Circuit Finals Rodeo, and Western Regional Wrestling Tournament fueled job growth in *Services' Hotels & Other Lodging Places*.

From one year ago, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 530. *Manufacturing*, *Services*, and *Retail Trade* led job growth. The opening of a new Ramada Inn in Chubbuck and the expansions at Walmart and Fred Meyer contributed to the

Southeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Pocatello City MSA (Bannock County)

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	40,570	40,440	39,200	0.3	3.5
Unemployment	1,660	1,700	2,010	-2.4	-17.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	4.2	5.1		
Total Employment	38,910	38,740	37,190	0.4	4.6
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	41,100	40,870	39,770	0.6	3.3
Unemployment	1,870	2,030	2,250	-7.9	-16.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5	5.0	5.7		
Total Employment	39,230	38,840	37,520	1.0	4.6
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	33,620	33,370	33,090	0.7	1.6
Goods-Producing Industries	4,490	4,450	4,370	0.9	2.7
Mining & Construction	1,490	1,450	1,550	2.8	-3.9
Manufacturing	3,000	3,000	2,820	0.0	6.4
Service-Producing Industries	29,130	28,920	28,720	0.7	1.4
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	1,800	1,780	1,850	1.1	-2.7
Wholesale Trade	1,400	1,380	1,470	1.4	-4.8
Retail Trade	7,030	7,010	6,900	0.3	1.9
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,460	1,450	1,450	0.7	0.7
Services	8,200	8,070	7,980	1.6	2.8
Government Administration	3,400	3,400	3,380	0.0	0.6
Government Education	5,840	5,830	5,690	0.2	2.6

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

550 additional jobs in *Services* and *Retail Trade*. The 180 new jobs in *Manufacturing* were widespread and occurred throughout the entire industry.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

Southeast Idaho Agriculture

The agricultural industry lives with risk. Southeast Idaho area farmers and ranchers continue to adapt to changes in the market, weather patterns, and other economic events.

Crops grown in Southeast Idaho consist mainly of potatoes, sugar beets, winter and spring wheat, alfalfa, barley, and corn. A few other crops such as canola, strawberries and other table vegetables and fruits are grown in the area, but in much smaller amounts. Livestock consists mainly of beef and dairy cattle, sheep, and poultry.

This season looks particularly risky for crop growers. Prices for potatoes and sugarbeets remain low despite growers' efforts to reduce supplies, and poor water conditions throughout the state as well as the Snake River Basin threaten irrigation water supplies. Some growers are participating in Idaho Power's buyback program. They will raise more dry-farm crops or leave acreage idle this year. That, coupled with a shorter growing season because of a lack of water, may diminish supplies and improve crop prices.

Prospects for the livestock industry are a bit brighter. The outbreak of Hoof and Mouth Disease has diminished beef supplies, driving prices up slightly. But, a lack of adequate irrigation water could reduce the supply of alfalfa and wheat, which could drive the cost of livestock production higher this year.

Overall, the lack of adequate irrigation water, reduced productivity, and an increase in power rates make this a particularly risky year for the agricultural industry.

AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Please note: Information contained in Economic Developments is obtained from area newspapers, local Job Service offices, trade publications, local area Chambers of Commerce publications, and other sources.

Bannock County

- A Pocatello business, Superior Modular Systems (SMS), received a contract to build a \$7.6 million apartment complex. The company expects to hire 25 more employees, bringing total employment at SMS to approximately 65. The local economy will benefit from the additional jobs and because SMS buys most of its materials locally.
- The old elementary school in Downey is being converted into a new assisted living center. The assisted living center is expected to open in May, will employ eight to ten people, and will include a recreation center.
- Construction has begun to build a psychiatric unit at Bannock Regional Medical Center in Pocatello. The \$600,000 unit will be built in the basement of the hospital's geriatric center on Memorial Drive and should be open for patients by mid-September 2001.
- Judy and Lott Hyde opened a new fabric store in the former Odd Fellows building, one of the oldest buildings in downtown Montpelier. The couple plans to renovate the entire historic building, which will house karate and dance classes and facilities for special events. The business is located at 843 Washington.
- The Greater Blackfoot Area Chamber of Commerce moved into its new location at 145 West Idaho Street in Blackfoot. The Chamber, which is currently 235 members strong, held an open house to show off their new facility.
- The Bronco Stop, a convenience store and fast food/deli, opened at 544 E. Walker in Blackfoot. The business employs 6 workers.
- The 185-foot-tall smokestack landmark in Preston, formerly used by Pet Milk Company, was demolished and will be replaced by a new fire/ambulance station. Construction on the new facility should begin this fall.
- Spring Creek Manor, an assisted living center, opened in American Falls. The 8,000 square-foot fa-

cility, located on Hillcrest Avenue, will employ approximately 15 people.

- The Astaris elemental phosphorus plant (formerly FMC), located in Power County, has announced plans to reduce its workforce by 203 jobs. The reductions will occur over the next 14 months. The first wave of layoffs, cutting 91 workers, will occur in June 2001. In September 2001, another 25 workers will be furloughed. The remaining 87 layoffs will occur in June 2002. By July 2002, Astaris' workforce will total 225 workers. Most of the workers at Astaris are from Bannock, Power, and Bingham counties, and the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.
- Nearly \$28 million in road construction projects are planned in Southeast Idaho this summer. Mild weather allowed road construction/enhancement projects to start throughout Southeast Idaho. Several major projects are planned for this region and will wrap-up this fall. They include:
- Rehabilitation of concrete surface on Yellowstone Avenue between Cedar Street and Chapel Road in Pocatello.
- Rehabilitation of surface on Pole Line Road between Burnside Avenue and Interstate 86 in Chubbuck.
- Bridge rehabilitation, Interstate 86 Chubbuck Interchange.
- Completion of bridge replacement and additional lanes on the U.S. 30 Portneuf River Bridge at McCammon.
- Asphalt seal coat applied to U.S. 30 between McCammon and the Topaz Bridge.
- Reconstruct and widen U.S. 30 from Simplot to Baptiste Road, near Pocatello.

Bingham County

- Preparation and reconstruction of Wooton Way between Highland Drive and U.S. 91 in Blackfoot.
- Continued improvements and safety enhancements of Interstate 15 Snake River Bridge, near Blackfoot.
- Widen U.S. 91 at Shelley from Center Street to the north city limits.

Caribou County

- Reconstruct and widen U.S. 30 from Alexander Junction to Soda Springs.

Power County

- Pavement rehabilitation project from I86 Rockland Interchange to Igo.

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NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) was 3.6 percent, down one-tenth of a percentage point from the previous month and from March 2000. The LMA's rate was 1.0 percentage point lower than the state's rate of 4.6 percent and seven-tenths of a percentage point lower than the national rate of 4.3 percent.

February to March 2001 experienced an increase of 830 persons in the *Civilian Labor Force*. Unemployment decreased by 80 and total employment increased by 920. From March 2000, the *Civilian Labor Force* increased by 1,850 people, unemployment decreased 30, and total employment increased 1,880.

Bonneville County held the lowest unemployment rate in the Bonneville LMA at 3.2 percent, followed by Jefferson, Butte and Bingham counties at 3.6, 3.8 and 4.4 percent, respectively. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, fell to an unemployment rate of 3.4 percent, down two-tenths of a percentage point from February 2001 and March 2000.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs increased by 890 over the month, for a total of 62,020 jobs in the LMA. Those industries that added 100 jobs or more are *Construction*, *Manufacturing*, *Wholesale Trade*, *Services*, and *Government Administration*. A mild and early spring helped *Construction* to start early, and an increase of 270 jobs came primarily from *Heavy Construction* and *Special Trades*. *Manufacturing* saw an increase of 100 jobs, with *Fabricated Metal* (40 jobs) and *Other Nondurable Goods* (50 jobs) being the significant contributors. *Wholesale Trade* increased 120 jobs, with equal contribution from *Durable Goods* and *Nondurable Goods*. *Services* saw a few changes over the month, but ended up with a net increase of 150 jobs. Losses were seen in *Amusement & Recreation* (40 jobs) and *Engineering & Management* (60 jobs). Bechtel, the main contractor for the National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), announced layoffs, which have caused some to start looking for other employment (see Special Topic below). *Government Administration* added 120 jobs to gear up for the summer season.

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, & Jefferson counties

	March 2001*	Feb 2001	March 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	82,520	81,690	80,670	1.0	2.3
Unemployment	2,980	3,060	3,010	-2.6	-1.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.6	3.7	3.7		
Total Employment	79,540	78,620	77,660	1.2	2.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	80,980	80,090	79,210	1.1	2.2
Unemployment	3,320	3,820	3,360	-13.1	-1.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	4.8	4.2		
Total Employment	77,660	78,270	75,850	-0.8	2.4
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	62,020	61,130	60,700	1.5	2.2
Goods-Producing Industries	8,720	8,350	8,700	4.4	0.2
Mining & Construction	3,500	3,230	3,430	8.4	2.0
Manufacturing	5,220	5,120	5,270	2.0	-0.9
Food Processing	2,750	2,740	2,880	0.4	-4.5
Ind. & Com. Mach. & Computer Equip.	460	460	520	0.0	-11.5
All Other Manufacturing	2,010	1,920	1,870	4.7	7.5
Service-Producing Industries	53,300	52,780	52,000	1.0	2.5
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,210	2,170	2,350	1.8	-6.0
Wholesale Trade	6,070	5,950	6,040	2.0	0.5
Retail Trade	11,320	11,260	11,270	0.5	0.4
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,890	1,870	1,830	1.1	3.3
Services	21,340	21,190	20,350	0.7	4.9
Government Administration	5,120	5,000	4,680	2.4	9.4
Government Education	5,350	5,340	5,480	0.2	-2.4
*Preliminary Estimate					
**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month					

A comparative year-to-year overview showed increases in many industries, with *Services* showing the largest gain of 990 jobs. *Engineering & Management* increased 330 jobs while *Business Services* closely followed with 260 jobs. *Social Services* and *Ag Related Services* both added over 100 jobs. *Government Administration* increased by over 400 jobs and *All Other Manufacturing* increased by over 100 jobs. Losses of just over 100 jobs were seen in *Transportation, Communication, & Utilities*; *Manufacturing (Food Processing)*; and *Government Education*. *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 1,320.

SPECIAL TOPIC:

The INEEL to Experience Changes

Just shortly after the start of the New Year, Bechtel BWXT Idaho, LLC (INEEL's main contractor) announced a hiring freeze. The announcement stated that officials would be looking over the budget to see what changes, if any, they would need to make. Employees were issued a memo stating Bechtel would be undertaking actions. Almost three months later, Bechtel's employees were sent letters and the public was informed that a reduction of force would be going into effect as soon as approval of conditions came through and could affect around 1,200 employees over the next 18 months. The best-case scenario is that Bechtel could expect a flat budget, while cleanup costs keep escalating.

Now, reality shows the company could lose 15 percent of its budget in the coming year.

Bechtel says that funding cuts to various Energy Department programs have strong ripple effects on the INEEL. Cuts will be seen in cleanup, nuclear energy research, renewable energy, environmental research, subsurface science, cleanup technology and energy-efficient transportation.

The contractor is offering early retirement to entice some employees to leave, but will not offer cash payment as its predecessor, Lockheed Martin, did. Employees that are at least 55 years of age and have worked at the INEEL for more than five years have until June 18 to decide if they want to take the early-out option (they will add three years of age and three years of service to calculate the benefits paid from the company-funded retirement plan). Following that round of cutbacks, a voluntary separation with incentives option will be available to employees this fall. Then, layoffs could follow if the workforce is still too large.

In 1994, Lockheed Martin reduced its workforce by about 3,000 jobs and avoided layoffs when it took over as main contractor for the INEEL. Early retirement, voluntary separation, and attrition were used and cash payments were offered to early retirees. Several companies were created in spin-offs from this reduction and many employees received additional schooling in order to find different employment. Affected counties lost 1,561 people from the labor force, but the unemployment rate decreased and population increased by 1,797 over the same time period. Areas that had been dependent on the site realized that they needed independence and started looking to diversify. Although many are still in the diversification mode, the economy is not nearly as dependent on the INEEL as it once was.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS:

Agricultural Happenings and Bingham County

With four counties (Bonneville, Butte, Clark, and Jefferson) in Northeast Idaho already having been declared drought disaster areas, farmers are facing a hard time. Insufficient snow pack in the mountains and higher elevations has given no alternative to some canal companies that have advised their customers water is likely to be cut short in the growing season. Farmers are contemplating what crops, if any, to grow. Potatoes are seriously damaged if they do not get adequate water towards the end of the growing season. Hay requires about as much water as potatoes do to grow; however, many farmers harvest hay several times before season's end. They could possibly manage to get a few cuttings in now since spring has come early. Yet, not many crops bring in the cash that potatoes have the potential to bring in. This makes for an interesting year, agriculturally speaking.

As if low water levels are not bad enough, the area faces many other hurdles in the gamble of farming and feeding a nation. The threat of power shortages have been an incentive for farmers to sell their power and get something out of a very risky growing season. Many fields will sit vacant

this year or crops will be planted in hopes of Mother Nature kicking in with a little humidity. An oversupply of potatoes this past year lowered the price and led many farmers to work together to cut supply in hopes of bringing the price up. Many potatoes have been sent to the needy by organizations willing to pay for shipping and handling. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service even stepped in to pay russet potato farmers a penny a pound for potatoes they give to charity, ethanol processors, feed to cattle or bury in the ground.

Madison County

A biotech manufacturing company, Ttest, announced its plans to locate in Rexburg. It is on the cutting edge for R&D on saliva test strips to test blood alcohol levels as accurately as 0.02-0.3%. The strips are contained in a small packet, and are no larger than a toothpick with a swab at the end. The company is also in the process of coming up with other enzyme systems testing for pregnancy, breast cancer, illegal drugs, nicotine, HIV and prostate cancer. It has been manufacturing its strips out of several different locations in California. When the Rexburg facility is built, it will combine operations to that one facility. The company picked Rexburg because of the warm reception and great dedication of the people interested in their business. Company officials said these actions were very evident and they could see a strong sense of community involvement and international involvement (multi-lingual capabilities and service activity) in the people there. Also, Regional Development Alliance (RDA) has offered funding of \$475,000 to begin construction.

The company will start building a 25,000-square-foot manufacturing facility on 4.6 acres of land donated by the city in the Rexburg Business Park on Salem Road (just over from Artco). The city has given it the address One T Test Way. The building will be started in June, with a projected completion date of February 2002. It hopes to expand to a 100,000-square-foot facility in the future and is allowing for that in the building plans. It should employ 100 people within the first year and add an additional 300 employees in years 2 to 3. Ttest says it will have 300 to 500 employees within five years. It will be employing a range of people from line workers to lab techs and researchers, and the *Post Register* states wages will range from \$7.50 to \$40 per hour, depending on the position. At this point, interested applicants should contact Rexburg Job Service at 356-4451 or Madison Economic Development Corp. at 356-6484 to get their names on a list to be supplied to the company when it is ready. For more information on the company, go online to <http://www.ttest.com>.

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The New Idaho

by Alan Porter, State Census Data Center Manager

The first local area Census 2000 data for Idaho represents more than just a multitude of numbers.

Idaho's increase of over 287,000 people during the last decade represents the largest population increase in our history and depicts the greatest demographic change since statehood.

Our 28.5 percent growth rate was the fifth highest in the nation after Nevada, Arizona, Colorado and Utah.

Demographically, we became more diverse. Our Hispanic population almost doubled during the last decade, while Idaho's native Indian population increased by almost one third. All the minority races in Idaho experienced population increases above the statewide average, changing the Gem State's demographic portrait and reflecting an overall trend in the U.S.

The state's population split between urban and rural areas shifted slightly with a continued decline in residents living in rural areas. We estimate urban areas now house about 62 percent of Idaho's population.

Births resulted in one-third of our population increase, while two-thirds of the state's growth was from net in-migration, the difference between people moving in and those moving out. Since 1910, Idaho has experienced net in-migration in one other decade - the 1970s.

Idaho's robust economy during the 1990's attracted new residents in search of a better lifestyle and allowed many of our young people to remain in their native state. Seventy percent of Idaho's net in-migration was concentrated in its three most populated areas - Ada, Canyon and Kootenai counties. Examining the number of births, deaths and the total migration both into and out of Idaho, it is quite possible that almost half of our population base since 1990 is made up of people who are new to the state.

That level of change seems stunning, but it emphasizes the importance of both private and public sector decision makers to carefully examine Census 2000 data as we plan for an array of issues like education, public safety, transportation, health care, con-

sumer markets, site location, business plans and rural revitalization.

In Idaho, every county and community will receive a statistical portrait of its people and how they live. Population size, distribution, ethnic make-up and rate of change will influence both our urban and rural communities in significant and far-reaching ways.

The Census 2000 numbers will be used annually to allocate federal funds. More than \$89 million in state revenue sharing and transportation dollars will go to cities and counties for public facilities, highways, public safety and other local government needs.

Idaho's city and county population information will also be the official data used by a six-member, bipartisan citizen's commission to redistrict the Legislature and the state's two congressional districts.

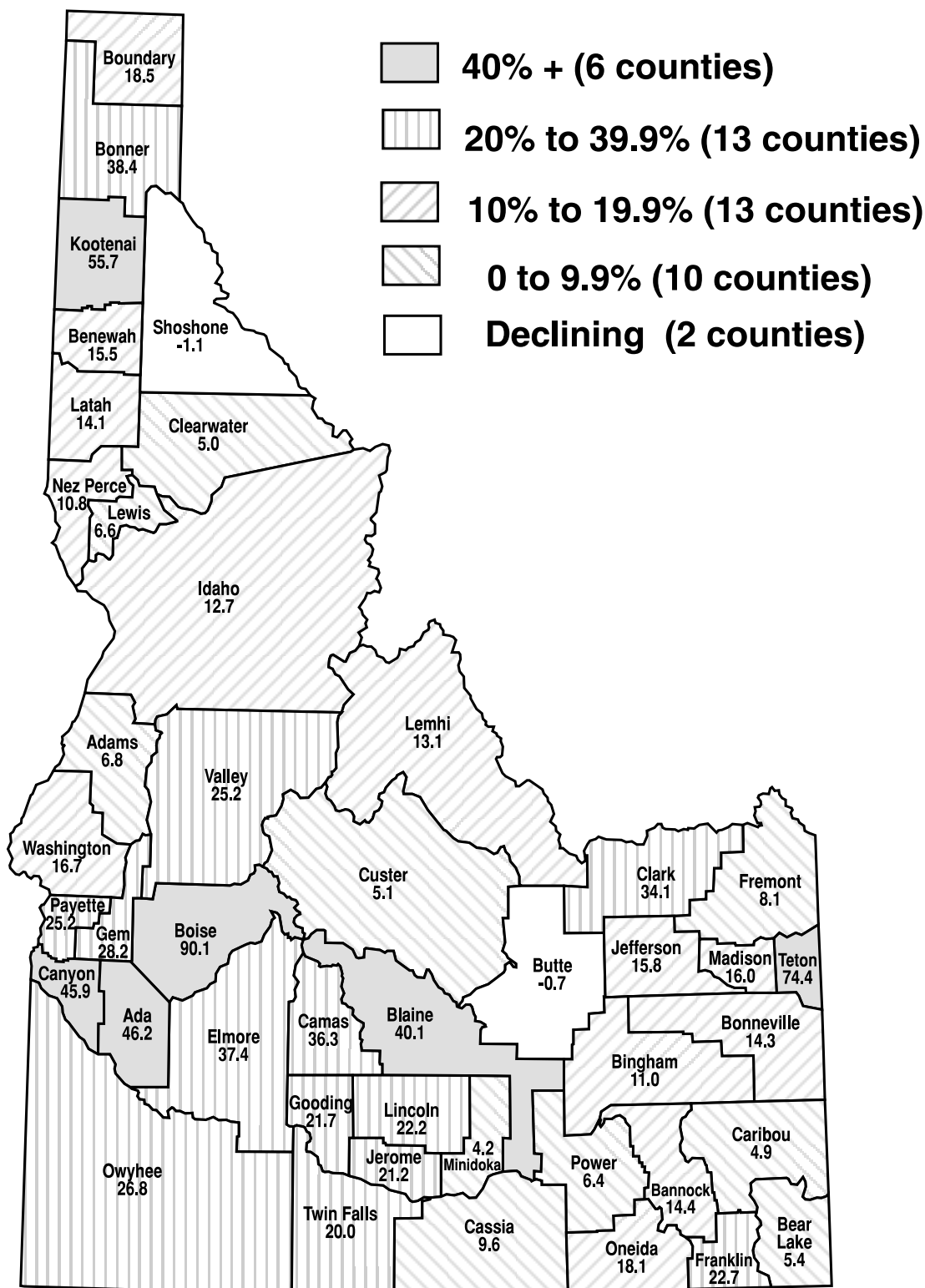
But government isn't the only entity that will benefit from Idaho's Census 2000 data. People from many walks of life will access the information to advocate for causes, research markets, target advertising, provide recreational opportunities, manage health care services and locate pools of skilled workers.

As economic and social characteristics become available next year for neighborhoods, Idaho businesses will use census numbers to reduce their financial risk and improve their market analysis. This new data will show - on a local, regional or national basis - how many men, women and children live in a specific area based on age and ethnic origin, sex and race, income and education and homeowners versus renters.

Census 2000 data is a valuable resource to anyone interested in how Idaho communities are changing. More avenues - from the Internet, to the Idaho Data Center to local libraries - are now available to access summarized census findings. These findings run the gamut of simple to complex. Our goal is to provide assistance to persons and organizations wanting to use this important and valuable information.

Percent Change in Population, 1990-2000, April 1, 2000

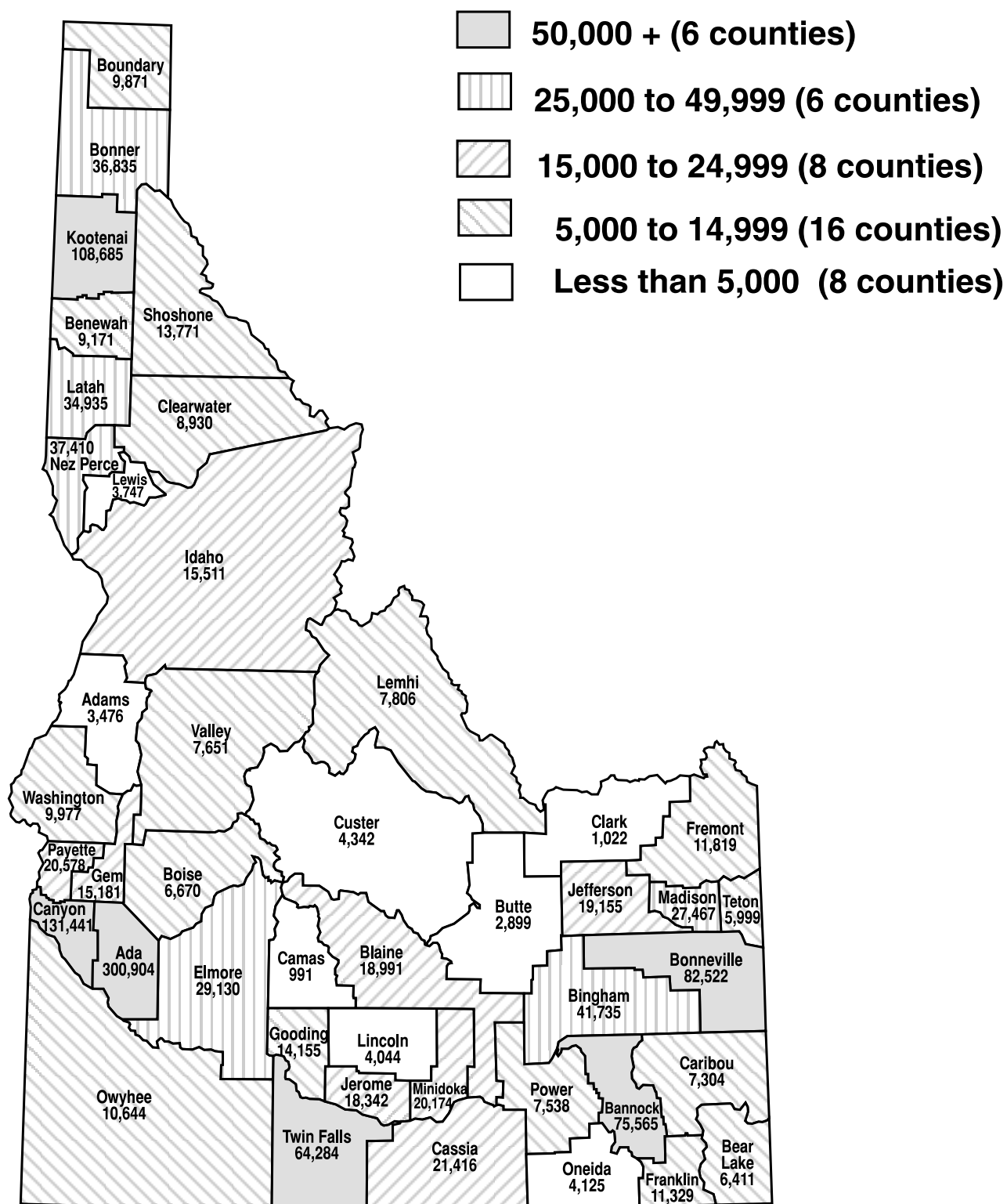
Source: US Bureau of the Census, March 2001



Prepared by the Idaho Department of Commerce

Population Counts, Census 2000, April 1, 2000

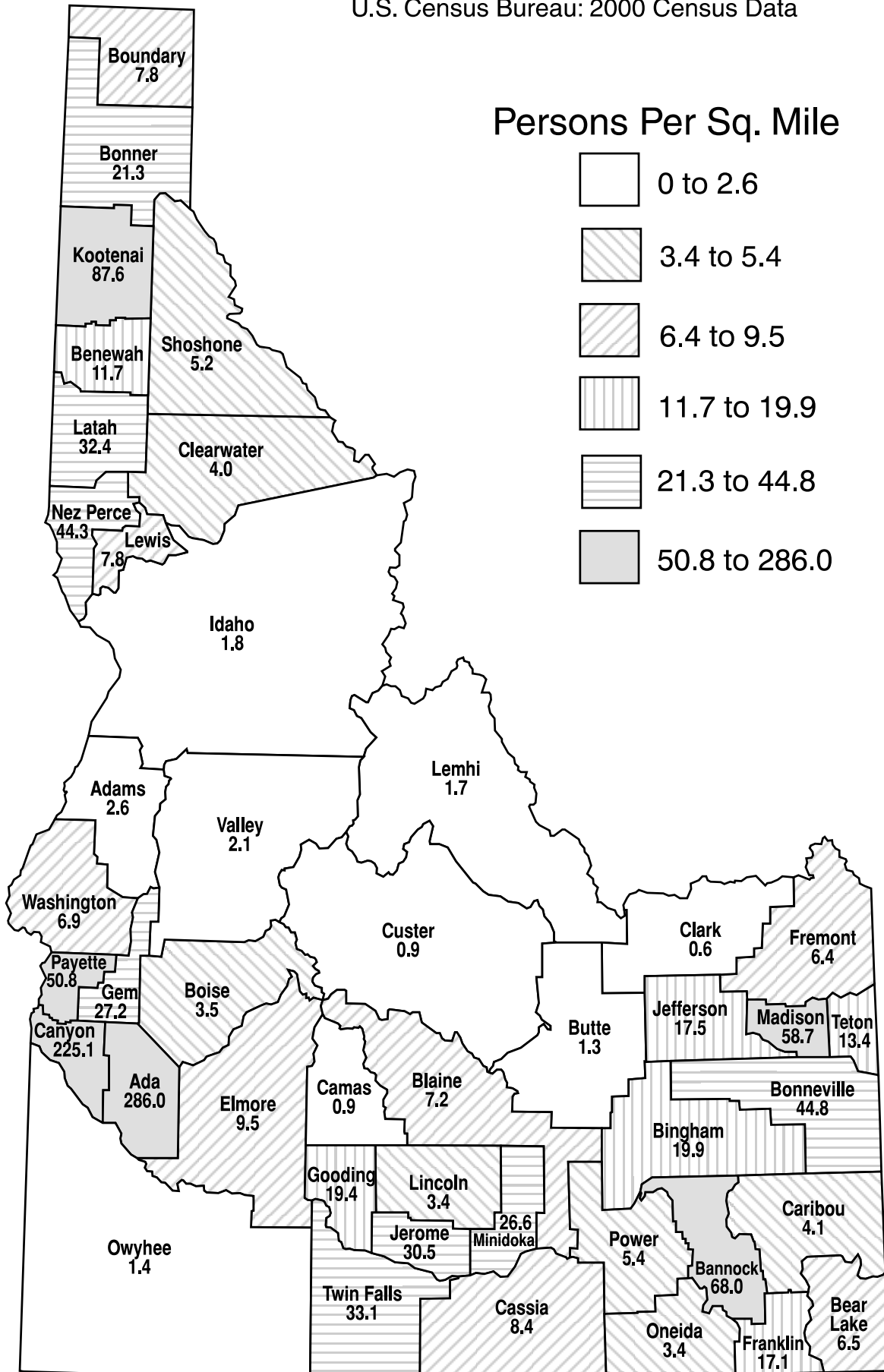
Source: US Bureau of the Census, March 2001



Prepared by the Idaho Department of Commerce

Idaho Population Density, 2000

U.S. Census Bureau: 2000 Census Data



Farm Employment Outlook

by Janell Hyer, Labor Market Analyst Supervisor

At 29,320, farm employment in Idaho increased 10.1 percent from February to March. The gain occurred in Unpaid Family Workers and Hired Workers, which increased 16.2 percent and 15.2 percent, respectively. Agricultural employment normally increases in March following the winter downturn, which occurs in November as the harvest ends. Agriculture activities in March include soil preparation and early planting. These are not labor-intensive activities.

The question on everyone's mind is how will a shortage of water and power impact agriculture employment. There is a lot of speculation based on limited information. This is what we know at this point in time. The lack of mountain snow pack and resulting low stream flow runoff will affect everyone in the state from the lack of water for irrigation to higher electricity bills. In certain areas of the state, many farmers are preparing for water shortages this year by planting fewer crops or those that

use less water or need less water in late summer. It is projected that shortages will occur in the following reservoirs: Magic, Mackay, Oakley, and Salmon Falls. The Boise Reservoir System and the seven of the eight major reservoirs on the upper Snake system will be at minimum levels by late August. The two exceptions are Anderson Ranch Reservoir and Jackson Lake.

Because of the predicted water shortage, Idaho Power offered an irrigation buy back program to farmers in southern Idaho. The program allowed irrigation customers to commit to an energy reduction of at least 100,000 kilowatt hours during the 2001 growing season. The process provided for customers to turn in a bid to Idaho Power that specified a specific amount of energy to be reduced and a price per kilowatt-hour that they would be willing to accept as compensation. Idaho Power felt that the benefit of reducing purchases of wholesale electricity by paying customers to reduce energy

**FYI Table 1: Idaho Power Company Irrigation Buy Back Program
Energy Reductions and Acres by County**

County	# of Acres Taken Out of Production	Total Acres Irrigated in County	Percent of Acres	Total kWh* in County	kWh* in Program	Percent of County kWh* in Program
Ada	6,933	78,112	8.9%	49,795,282	13,522,668	27.2%
Adams	0	27,701	0.0%	407,128	100,000	24.6%
Bannock	289	41,910	0.7%	12,011,478	424,323	3.5%
Bingham	19,413	321,610	6.0%	192,338,507	40,108,117	20.9%
Blaine	3,869	56,909	6.8%	22,997,887	5,741,179	25.0%
Canyon	12,314	221,051	5.6%	164,000,967	25,598,413	15.6%
Cassia	7,287	266,095	2.7%	140,729,972	43,048,384	30.6%
Elmore	38,144	91,153	41.8%	183,246,357	116,386,857	63.5%
Gooding	1,531	112,665	1.4%	81,802,665	6,257,777	7.6%
Jerome	11,992	151,726	7.9%	142,797,939	24,601,646	17.2%
Lemhi	150	82,351	0.2%	5,473,836	115,295	2.1%
Lincoln	6,285	72,518	8.7%	18,634,714	18,748,457	100.6%
Minidoka	13,640	180,791	7.5%	191,822,033	38,333,812	20.0%
Owyhee	12,527	131,976	9.5%	120,019,066	52,424,373	43.7%
Payette	759	52,566	1.4%	12,974,020	1,518,591	11.7%
Power	6,730	118,229	5.7%	106,163,607	18,895,395	17.8%
Twin Falls	12,098	276,307	4.4%	214,217,767	93,067,716	43.4%
Washington	478	44,686	1.1%	11,328,225	612,703	5.4%
TOTAL	154,439	2,328,356		1,670,761,450	499,505,706	

SOURCE: Idaho Power Company — March 23, 2001

compensation would far outweigh the cost of the program. FYI Table 1 has the buy back information as of March 23, 2001.

The predicted water shortage has resulted in farmers planting different crops in southern Idaho this year. There will be fewer acres of potato and sugarbeets because these crops are water intensive crops. It is anticipated that more grain, hay, and other short-term growing crops will be grown. The reduction in the number of acres planted in sugarbeets, potatoes, and dry beans is likely to reduce the demand for seasonal workers because the labor intensive jobs such as hoeing, weeding, and thinning will be needed on fewer acres. Crops, such as feed corn, feed grains, and hay, require less labor intensive activities. The changes in the mix of crops will also result in the earlier layoff of seasonal workers. Some might be able to obtain some fill-in work as drivers and harvest workers in the sugarbeet and potato harvest, but many farmers will employ their own workers before hiring seasonal workers. As the agriculture season progresses, it is possible that the supply of agriculture workers will exceed the demand.

North Idaho agriculture activity is not being as adversely affected by the water shortage. The main crops are grain and hay that are not irrigated but get their moisture from rain. There has been sufficient rain this spring that the crops are looking good. Other crops in the area, such as hops, peas, and grass seed, require irrigation only if there is not enough natural moisture. However, available water does not appear to be a problem in the area. Coeur d'Alene, Priest, and Pend Oreille Lakes are nearly full. Pend Oreille Lake may be one of the few water storage facilities in the northwest that will have water available for release by late summer.

Glossary of Labor Market Terms

Agriculture Employment: Persons on agriculture payrolls who work or receive pay for any period during the survey week. This includes owners, operators, unpaid family members who work at least 15 hours a week, and hired laborers.

Average Hourly Earnings/Average Weekly Hours: The average total money earnings earned by production or non-supervisory workers for selected industries. The average number of hours worked by production or non-supervisory workers including overtime, paid vacation, and sick leave. The data is collected for the week including the 12th of the month.

Average Weekly Earnings: Average Hourly Earnings multiplied by Average Weekly Hours.

Civilian Labor Force: A count of non-institutional persons 16 years of age and over residing within a specific geographic area, excluding members of armed forces, who are classified as employed, unemployed and seeking employment, or involved in a labor dispute.

Consumer Price Index (CPI): A national index measuring changes over time in the price of a fixed market basket of goods and services. There are two indexes—the All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) represents the buying habits of about 80 percent of the non-institutional population of the United States, and the Urban Wage & Clerical Workers (CPI-W) represents 40 percent of the population.

Covered Employers: Employers who are subject to state and federal Unemployment Insurance laws.

Durable Goods: Also known as “hard goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers with a normal life expectancy of three years or more.

Employed: Individuals, 16 years of age or older, who worked at least 1 hour for pay or profit or worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business during the week including the 12th day of the month. Individuals are also counted as employed if they had a job but did not work because they were: ill, on vacation, in a labor dispute, prevented from working because of bad weather, or temporarily absent for similar reasons.

Initial Claim: Any notice of unemployment filed to request (1) a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation or (2) a second or subsequent period of unemployment within a benefit year or period of eligibility.

Labor Market Area (LMA): An area that consists of a central city or cities and the surrounding territory within commuting distance. It is an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find

employment without changing place of residence. Idaho has nine LMAs.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA): An area that has either a city with a population of at least 50,000 or a Bureau of Census urbanized area of at least 50,000 and a total metropolitan area of at least 100,000. The Office of Management and Budget designates the MSAs. There are two MSAs in Idaho—Boise City (including Ada and Canyon counties) and Pocatello City (including Bannock County).

Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment: Persons on non-farm establishment payrolls (including employees on paid sick leave, paid holiday, or paid vacation) who work or receive pay for any part of the week including the 12th of the month. It is a count of jobs by place of work. It does not include self-employed, unpaid volunteer or family workers, domestic workers in households, military personnel and persons who are laid off, on leave without pay, or on strike for the entire reference period.

Nondurable Goods: Also known as “soft goods” because they include items manufactured or provided by wholesalers that generally last for only a short period of time (three years or less).

Seasonally Adjusted: Data is seasonally adjusted to remove the impact of regular events that occur at the same time every year such as the effect of cold weather on outdoor activities, the Christmas holiday, or the summer influx of youth into the labor market.

Unemployed: Those individuals, 16 years of age or older, who do not have a job but are available for work and actively seeking work during the week including the 12th of the month. The only exceptions to these criteria are individuals who are waiting to be recalled from a layoff and individuals waiting to report to a new job within 30 days—these, too, are considered unemployed.

Unemployment Insurance: Unemployment Insurance is a program for the accumulation of funds paid by employers, to be used for the payment of Unemployment Insurance to workers during periods of unemployment which are beyond their control.

Unemployment Rate: The number of persons unemployed expressed as a percentage of the labor force.

Weekly Benefit Amount: The amount payable to a claimant for a compensable week of total unemployment.

Weeks Claimed: The number of weeks that unemployed workers claimed Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Weeks Compensated: The number of weeks for which compensation was actually paid.

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